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The Intelligence War

GOLENIEWSKI—THE ANONYMOUS MOLE

By ROBERT MOSS

RECENT statements attributed to the Polish defector, Col Michael Goleniewski, in the NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE, have revived public interest in his role in the unmasking of George Blake and other Soviet "moles" in Western intelligence agencies.

Senior counter-intelligence sources confirm that the leads provided by Goleniewski in a series of 14 anonymous letters mailed to the American Embassy in Bern after April, 1958 (and in CIA debriefings after his defection to the United States in 1960) were decisive in the uncovering of Blake, Heinz Felfe—the West German Philby—and other KGB penetration agents in the West.

Though Goleniewski has aroused incredulity with his claims to be the Grand Duke Alexey son of the Tsar, and to have survived the Ekaterinburg massacre (despite the fact that he was born 20 years later than Alexey) this does not reflect on the past contribution that he made to Western intelligence.

His breadth of knowledge stemmed from the fact that he was a trusted collaborator of the Soviet KGB inside the First Department of the Polish secret service, the UB. (His rank and status are garbled in the New York Times account.)

His close relationship with the KGB was, ironically, the key to his survival in the spring of 1960, after word leaked back to Moscow that someone in his department was feeding secrets to the CIA.

Improbable pseudonym

Goleniewski had taken remarkable precautions to protect himself. In his letters to the United States embassy in Switzerland he identified himself only by an improbable pseudonym, "Hechenschuetze," and initially made out that he was writing from Prague.

Suspecting a Soviet "mole" in the CIA, he had asked for his letters to be forwarded to J. Edgar Hoover, then the FBI Director. But, following standard procedure, the American ambassador handed over the correspondence to the CIA station in Bern. However, the CIA was not able to identify the letter-writer until he defected.

Since much of Goleniewski's information affected British security, the CIA sent an experienced counter-espionage officer to London at the end of 1959 to brief his British counterparts. Within the CIA, there was still some scepticism about Goleniewski's bona fides, encouraged by the anonymity and the lack of apparent motivation.

But his leads—including the contents of KGB reports from agents inside Western services that had been passed on to the UB—were starting to check out.

Time was also running out for Goleniewski. In March, 1960, he was secretly approached by the top KGB liaison officer attached to the Polish secret service.

The KGB told him: "There is a pig in the First Department" and asked for Goleniewski's assistance—as the Russians' most trusted man in the UB—in tracking down the Polish "traitor."

Later, some CIA counter-intelligence experts concluded that the KGB had been tipped off by an agent who had had access to the contents of the London briefings, at which an American official had informally speculated that "Heckenschuetze" was a section chief or deputy chief of the First Department of the UB. (Despite Goleniewski's attempts to suggest he was a Czech, the nature of his information pointed to Warsaw.)

Later, Goleniewski became conscious that suspicion might be turning against him when he found that his travel requests were being regularly refused.

At the end of 1960, he seized the opportunity presented by the chief of the UB (the man who had been blocking his travel) to arrange an operational trip to East Berlin.

Once there, he telephoned his CIA contact number, and crossed over into West Berlin, where he introduced himself to the Americans by his real name for the first time.

Nazi slurs

One of Goleniewski's most fascinating leads, which now appears highly topical in the light of the upsurge in neo-Nazi terrorism around Western Europe, was to KGB manipulation of Nazi and Fascist networks after 1945.

Other defectors, including the former deputy chief of the disinformation department of the Czech secret service, Ladislav Bittman, have pointed to the strong KGB interest in besmirching pro-Nato politicians in West Germany with the neo-Nazi tag.

Before Goleniewski's defection, it was also known that the Russians had laid the groundwork for applying blackmail pressure to Germans who had been involved in Nazi organisations at the end of the 1939-45 War, when Colonel-General Ivan Serov of the NKVD sent hand-picked raiding parties to seize the files of the Gestapo and the SS in Berlin.

For a decade, KGB translators and analysts working on the eighth floor of Number 2 Dzherzhinskiy Square in Moscow were kept busy sifting through the "Serov collection" and passing on whatever documents could be used by Soviet agents in the field.

Right up until the present day, the "Serov collection" has been a vital tool in the Soviet recruitment of former Nazis and Nazi collaborators as agents, informers, financial middle men, agent provocateurs — and controllers of "Right-wing" terrorist networks.

In the neo-Nazi underworld, there are many real-life organisations resembling the fictional conspiracy of former SS officers described in Frederick Forsyth's novel, "The Odessa File." Goleniewski revealed that one of them, code-named "Hacke," was taken over by the KGB.

The origins of the Hacke group date back to 1945, when Martin Bormann, sensing Germany's impending doom, enlisted a hand-picked cadre of Nazis to form a secret network to smuggle gold and plundered treasure abroad and to plot the eventual

The group was organised in five-man cells, and was kept deliberately small. One of the obsessions of Bormann and his comrades was to prepare the destruction of "Jews and plutocrats in the United States," who were regarded as key instruments of Hitler's impending defeat.

Small though it was, the Hacke organisation had no secrets from Soviet Intelligence. Within months of its creation, Soviet security knew everything about it.

The Russians' source was no less a personage than the Gestapo chief, Heinrich Muller, who had entered into secret contacts with the NKVD at the start of 1944, in a bid to take out a personal insurance policy against Hitler's defeat.

Like many top Nazis, Muller had more ideological sympathy for the Soviet Union than for the Western democracies. In his memoirs, Walter Schellenberg recalls a conversation with Muller in which the Gestapo chief spoke of "the unified and really uncompromising spiritual and biological force" that he believed to be evolving under Soviet Communism.

With Muller's covert assistance — the link was the Gestapo chief in Danzig, also a double agen for the Russians—Gen. Viktor Abakumov, one of the chiefs of Soviet State Security, took personal charge of the infiltration and manipulation of the Hacke network.

For many years after 1945, the KGB continued to work through this Nazi old boys' network. The Russians were able to pick up former Nazi espionage agents in the United States and Western Europe who were used for their own purposes.

Goleniewski knew a great deal about this highly sensitive Soviet operation because of the leading role he played in the interrogation of the former Nazi Gauleiter of Danzig, who was arrested by the Poles at the end of the war.

The KGB's hand in running "Odessa"-type organisations remains one of its most jealously guarded secrets, not least because of the revulsion that the discovery of this covert alliance between Nazis and Communists could be expected to inspire among the general public.

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